

# Shire of Denmark



# Minutes

## BUSH FIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HELD IN COUNCIL'S RECEPTION ROOM,  
953 SOUTH COAST HIGHWAY, DENMARK,  
THURSDAY, 7<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019,

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## **DISCLAIMER**

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**1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS**

The Presiding Person opened the meeting at 6:34 pm.

**2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/APPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**MEMBERS: (Voting)

- |                          |                      |  |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cr Mark Allen        | Council Delegate / Chairman            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cr Roger Seeney      | Council Delegate / Somerset Hill Proxy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Ross McDougall    | C.B.F.C.O                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Lez Baines        | D.C.B.F.C.O                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Adrian Kranendonk | F.W.O.                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Chris Hoare       | East Denmark Proxy                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Craig Lilley      | Kordabup FCO                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Craig Hughes      | Carmarthen FCO                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Brian Vigus       | Tingledale FCO                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Murray Brooker    | Mt Lindesay FCO                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Joe Baker         | Ocean Beach FCO                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Bryce Edwards     | Owingup FCO                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Ivars Sulcs       | Peaceful Bay FCO                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Lee Shelley       | VFRS Captain                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Carl Wesley       | Mt Shadforth FCO                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Simon Coppock     | William Bay FCO                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Sid Marshall      | Scotsdale FCO                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Neville Brass     | Nornalup FCO                           |

MEMBERS:

- |                          |               |                      |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Wes Bailye | (Non-Voting)<br>DBCA |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------------|

STAFF:

- |                          |                       |                                      |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mrs Charmaine Shelley | (Non-Voting)<br>Senior Ranger        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Scott Medhurst     | Community Emergency Services Manager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr David Schober      | Manager of Community Services        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ms Melanie Haymont    | Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator   |

VISITORS:

- |                          |                 |                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Nigel Marsh  | Mt Lindesay BFB           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Geoff Bowley | Scotsdale / Shadforth BFB |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Bart Lebbing | Scotsdale / Shadforth BFB |

APOLOGIES:

- |                          |                    |                             |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Callum Baxter   | Somerset Hill FCO           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Graham Thallon  | Auxiliary FCO               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Mike Hills      | Harewood FCO                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Paul Ashton     | ABP Forestry Representative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Daniel Birleson | DFES Area Officer           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ms Gail Guthrie    | Mehinup Proxy               |

ABSENT:

- |                          |                 |                |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Kevin Hard   | Parryville FCO |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mr Don Atkinson | Town FCO       |

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Name	Item No	Interest	Nature
NIL			

**3. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PERSON PRESIDING**

Cr Allen welcomed everyone to the room and introduced visitors to the committee.

Cr Allen spoke about the Sprigdale Heights fire and how it was impressive to see the investment the Shire has placed on supporting fireground operations worked during a real time incident. The equipment and the staff have put a lot of time and effort into improving the support they offer and it is a true credit to all involved.

Cr Allen noted despite the slow start to bushfire season Cr Allen noted that not long after this time last year we had a series of fires that occurred across the Shire these incidents were intense and resource demanding. Cr Allen hoped we would not see a repeat this year however is confident that if we do that we are prepared to tackle it.

**4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES****4.1 Committee Meeting Minutes**

Mr Alex Williams noted a small correction to the minutes in the Record of Attendance to be actioned by Mr Scott Medhurst and the Committee recommended the following once that correction had been made.

<b>COMMITTEE DECISION &amp; OFFICER RECOMMENDATION</b>	ITEM 4.1
MOVED: MURRAY BROOKER	SECONDED: Lez Baines
That the minutes of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee Meeting held on the 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2018, be confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.	
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY	

**5. OFFICER REPORTS****5.1 Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)**

Nil

**5.2 Department of Biodiversity Conservation & Attractions – Parks and Wildlife (DBCA – PaW)**

DBCA District Fire Coordinator Wes Bailye provided the following report to the Committee.

**Bushfires**

*7 bushfires to date*

**Fire Season So Far**

*We have commenced 9 prescribed burns, completing 6 to date. A total of 31,065.5ha completed, 9,339ha within the Shire of Denmark*

**Autumn Burn Program**

*A further 18 planned burns are proposed for the remaining season within the Frankland district totalling 43416ha. Approximately 8 burns totalling 14,000ha are planned within the Shire of Denmark*

1. Nornalup Foreshore
2. Quarram
3. William Bay
4. My Leahy
5. Parry Inlet
6. Styx
7. Trent
8. Mitchell River Road

Mr Murray Brooker and Cr Roger Seeney queried Mr Wes Bailye in regard to burn boundaries on the Mitchell River Road and Nornalup Foreshore burns. Mr Wes Bailye explained the burn boundaries in detail and the reasoning behind them.

### 5.3 Australian Bluegum Plantations

Nil

### 5.4 Chief Bush Fire Control Officer

Mr Ross McDougall provided the following report to the Committee.

#### Incidents

*This season so far has been fairly quiet with a small number of minor incidents; however on the afternoon of 25 February there was a larger incident on Springdale Heights that threatened a number of houses. There was a very good response from Bush Fire Brigades including Young's Siding and Denmark VFRS and the efforts resulted in at least three houses being saved as well as several out buildings. Because it has been very quiet we were able to send some crew and appliances to assist Bremer Bay and Esperance.*

#### Permits

*Because we became busy with a response to the Esperance fires we missed an opportunity to extend the Prohibited Period but despite that we are able to control legal fires by not issuing permits or applying certain conditions. Because the conditions are very dry we toyed with restrictive conditions that were emailed to FCOs. Late that day I walked in to the Karri forest behind my place and I have never seen it so dry, I know I have only been here ten years, but it made me quite nervous about allowing any fires and knowing if they escaped it would be volunteers that had to deal with them. So I made an executive decision that no permits will be issued. In this BFAC meeting we will consider the permits to burn.*

#### Denmark Chief Standing Down

*After four years as the Chief and two years as the Deputy I have decided to hang up my red helmet. I have sold my house and will take up an offer from my son Robert to move to Mildura to help him set up a fabrication business in a few months, so one door closes but another door opens. It has been a privilege to lead the Denmark Bush Fire Service; only because the volunteers do a really good job that the Chief looks good!! I have had so many comments from people that Denmark Brigades do an amazing job both locally and willingly assist other communities hundreds of kilometres away. I have had a lot of Fire Managers comments about how Denmark volunteers work is so effective. I have had time to think about that and I believe it is two factors that separate Denmark from others and I believe it is good technique and good discipline. Other locations are learning but Denmark does it.*

Cr Mark Allen took the time to recognise the services that Mr Ross Mcdougall had provided to the Shire of Denmark and the greater Denmark community the committee presented Mr Ross Mcdougall with a thankyou gift and card. Members of the committee then took the opportunity to share thanks to Mr Ross Mcdougall and wish him well in his future endeavours.

## 5.5 Community Emergency Services Manager

Community Emergency Services Manager Scott Medhurst provided the following report to the committee.

### Prevention

- *Mitigation works are ongoing in the Shire, So far we have completed slashing and mechanical clearing works as well as spraying. With the remainder of the budget we will focus on works around some of our vulnerable communities. These treatments will be in consultation with the Mel in regard to the Shires overall BRMP and local communities and groups.*
- *Prohibited Burn Time ends on the 28<sup>th</sup> of Feb please keep the forecast weather and current environmental conditions in mind when writing permits and air on the side of caution.*
- *Shire of Denmark Bushfire Risk Management Plan ongoing – Mel Haymont is putting in some excellent work in this field and will report on it.*

### Community Engagement

- *We continue to make massive leaps and bounds in this space and I will continue to support brigades and individuals with programs in this space where I can.*
- *DFES Digital Media are planning a workshop in the Great Southern this year which will assist brigades with Social Media and how to make the most of it. I will be in contact when there is more info available.*

### Preparedness

- *With the 'high threat period' coming to an end please remember to submit any vehicle faults and repairs needed so these can be planned for over the cooler months.*
- *AVL Testing. Please remember this needs to be done monthly during the high threat period and it is audited. If you are at the station for training or after a job it takes about 2 minutes to complete.*

### Training

- *Training courses for the year are progressively being added to eAcademy. Please take advantage of them. I have tried to offer a good range of courses this year to ensure that our members skills are accurately reflected.*
- *Please remember all members need to have completed VFF1 to go on the fireground. I appreciate that some members may have the skills but not the qualifications on paper. Please contact me directly about this and we will work to have their skills recognised officially.*

### PPC/PPE

- *I have managed to source some extra funding in this space and have completed another order. If anything has been damaged over this fire season or needs replacing please let me know so I can do another order.*
- *I know I carry on about this but it is great to see so many members in clean PPC at fires. Remember clean gear is safe gear!*
- *Please remember to wear all PPC appropriately its not going to protect you if its not worn properly and may have implications for you if you get hurt.*

### Response

- *There has been an overwhelming effort by our members so far over summer with local incidents and deployments. I can not thank the volunteers and their families and support networks enough. Without you guys and girls the community and state would be in very different state this summer.*
- *The Springdale heights fire was a good example of how committing a lot of resources to a small area is very effective. An excellent result with 3 very close shaves for residents and 5 houses saved.*

- *Triple Zero is the most effective way to report of fire/smoke/unauthorised burning if you are advised of these by a member of the public or another brigade member you should be referring them Triple Zero or make the call yourself then advise up the chain as appropriate. This allows visibility of incidents at a local, Regional and State level and allows for the most efficient dispatch of resources from within the Shire.*

### **Other**

- *Denmark Chief Thanks to Ross for his support and guidance in my infancy in this role. I would like to thank Ross personally and wish him all the best in his future pursuits and travels and I am sure our loss will be CFA Milduras gain!*
- *Media - Please remember that when you are representing the BFB's that you are representing the Shire. Any requests from the media are to be directed to the CEO or DFES as appropriate for approval.*
- *SMS Trial – 5 Brigades have submitted their lists, these lists have been created by DFES and are now being mapped to ensure they work correctly into the future we expect them to be online soon.*
- *Brigade Annual General Meetings, I am happy to attend AGM's if you would like me too and I can perform the role of returning officer should you need one and I am able to make it to your meeting.*
- *Ocean Beach Fire Shed – Removal Contract has been awarded to a local resident who is also making a donation to the brigade (subject to tender being awarded and signed). Tender is in the last stages of being awarded and should progress quickly from there.*
- *CESM at Jobs, please don't worry if I turn up at a job, I am not there to take over or anything like that. I am there in a support role and to assist if required. It is also a great way for me to get to meet people and learn from others that have been in the area for many years. It is the opinion of Ross, Lez and myself that we have very capable FCO's within the Shire and are happy with how you run jobs.*

## **5.6 Bushfire Risk Planning Coordinator**

Ms Melanie Haymont to provide the following report to the committee

- *Bushfire Risk Management contextual plan draft is finished and being internally reviewed before being sent to DFES for review.*
- *Asset identification for the town planning area is complete, this is one of six planning areas to be assessed.*
- *Work completed around the water treatment plant to facilitate a hazard reduction burn in Autumn, these works were carried out in conjunction with the Water corp bushfire mitigation team. The group have offered their support to come back with a team and appliances to help carry out the proposed burn*
- *Bushfire Risk Management Officers seconded to the education department, will be coming down this term to assess the primary School and the High school*
- *Two applications to the Natural disaster resilience fund have been made on behalf of The Shire of Denmark*

### ***Bushfire Resilience in the Great Southern***

*This Project aims to build resilience in the Great Southern via an operational agreement between the neighbouring Shires of Plantagenet, Denmark and Albany through applying a BAL contouring methodological approach to our high-risk communities. Some communities have legacy risk not addressed by State planning Policy 3.7. This project will aid in the development of a rigorous physical risk mitigation program where possible, develop a greater understanding of bushfire risk in the community through landscape fire behaviour mapping, detailed weather analysis on fire run potential and evacuation scenarios, to better inform our community and community groups around actual risk. Assist State and Local Government organisations in the interpretation of risk to these communities and strategic methods to improve resilience.*

*Level 3 BPAD Evacuation Planning , Identification of vulnerable communities where evacuation may be compromised and recommendations to improve opportunities for evacuation or if evacuation not probable /possible under certain circumstances, Identifying areas for possible community refuge Method 2 Bal assessments on existing evacuation centres will aid the LG'Ss in the identification of suitable buildings and existing buildings ability to withstand fire and provide a tenable environment before and after an event. Improving Resilience and confidence in long term preparedness*

### **Holistic Community Resilience building for Bush fire**

*The Shire has Begun a Bushfire Risk Mitigation Planning project. Assessments show a trend towards the community being at extreme risk from bushfire. Significant remnant vegetation on private property has been identified as a major risk, compounded by fuel loads on private property not being proactively managed and lack of community connectedness. Research supports that the more prepared and connected a community is for an emergency the more resilient it is. The project builds resilience and sustainability helping people with their physical and physiological preparedness providing access to quality, innovative education sources crossing demographic boundaries to provide a holistic approach to resilience building that will have generational stability through*

- *Training Volunteer Bushfire Ready facilitators*
- *Community demonstration fire wise garden/education space*
- *Property planning; learn to manage bushfire risk including fuel loads, options to evacuate, a greater understanding of individual risk. These plans would be available to emergency personnel to direct resources*
- *Tour demonstrating local examples of preparing private property from bushfire attack through design and fuel reduction*
- *Redi Plan & Pillow Case Program delivered to youth and their parents to assist with psychological and practical preparedness*
- *Fire and Biodiversity workshop inspire and empower participants with strategies to create safer sustainable properties in the face of ongoing threat of fire and climate change*

*The Natural disaster resilience fund is a federal funding source we should know by the end of July if we were successful in obtaining either of these grants*

There was discussion from the committee in regard to roadside verge management as part of the Bushfire Risk Mitigation process, This discussion revolved around the practicalities of the process and how the Shire could do it better moving forward.

Further discussion around the resilience projects that have been undertaken occurred and how their success could be measured.

## **6. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Mr Ross McDougall – Issuing of Permits**

Mr Ross Mcdougall explained the reasoning behind the decision to not issue permits which mainly revolved around current climatic conditions. It was then opened to the committee to provide feedback. There was unanimous support.

The committee resolved to revisit the issuing of permits on a weekly basis as part of The Friday morning radio schedule or if significant rainfall occurred prior. This lead to discussion around the number of permits issued and how we controlled that. Mr Ross Mcdougall and Mr Scott Medhurst explained the processes in place to ensure that we are prepared to act in cancelling permits if incidents occur and resources are stretched.



Cr Roger Seeney raised the question about Camp and Cooking fires at Holiday and Rental accommodation. Mr David Schober and Mr Scott Medhurst spoke to the Shires processes and policies around this and that they were currently being reviewed.

## **6.2 Mr Ross Mcdougall – Feast not Fire Dinner**

Mr Ross Mcdougall discussed the previous events and how they worked and asked for feedback from the committee in regard to how they would like to see it work in the future. The committee raised several points about how effective all events have been and what worked and what did not.

### **OUTCOME:**

The committee resolved to a rotational basis of events to be reviewed annually this means 1 year a sit down meal and the following year a bonfire type event with 2019 being a sit down type event. The CESM will form a sub committee outside of the meeting to organise the event.

## **6.3 Mr Carl Wesley – Mobile Phone Reception in Fire Sheds**

Now that some Brigades are on SMS call-out, and as a natural progression, more will follow, the issue of mobile phone reception, or rather the lack of it, becomes an item to be addressed. Up until now, the lack of phone reception, whilst it has been a nuisance, has been of a less important nature, however, that, like everything, is changing. The ability to contact members, such as maybe one who may be on the way to the shed for a call-out and have hit an unexpected snag and needs to not only contact the FCO but also get an acknowledged response, which then has an impact on response times, to point out one item only.

Added to the above, times and training has taken a turn in respect that most items important to crews on the ground, have training guidelines and resources online available via the eAcademy portal. Of course, the main aim of this tool for training is that everyone, from Kununurra to Esperance receives the same information, which keeps both important and mundane matters uniform, but also the site is in constant review and update, therefore being able to access the latest information for training purposes in most important. One of the benefits of this uniform training is that crews can be deployed anywhere in the state and because the training is uniform, they can slot in straight away.

We at Scotsdale/Mt Shadforth train on the first Saturday of every month. We have a large TV set up so as we can run training videos and also show members through the eAcademy portal to show them Operational Updates and help them to navigate the portal itself, therefore, to be able to use this resource, mobile phone coverage is most important. At the moment, coverage at our shed is all but non existent.

A booster located at most remote buildings works very successfully. We have approached Telstra to see about having a booster fitted at the shed for free as they can cost up to \$1800 otherwise. Telstra has offered us a booster at a discount but it still means that we have to find approximately \$800. The Redmond Brigade in Albany managed to get their booster fitted by Telstra for free after a lot of lobbying.

The point of my inclusion of this item in our agenda is that need and use of mobile phones is the way of things and it will increase. Instead of our Brigade going to Telstra to try to get them fitted for free, and then other Brigades doing the same, we consider that if all the Brigades combine forces, in conjunction with the Shire, maybe more leverage can be applied.

Discussion from the committee took place around the importance of the issue and how brigades can be supported in achieving mobile phone reception. The following

brigades are without reception at their sheds. Scotsdale/Mt Shadforth, Kordabup, Owingup and Somerset Hill.

**OUTCOME:**

The CESM will support this process with all brigades wanting to acquire a booster in the form of a letter of support to brigades and coordination of information sharing between brigades.

**6.4 Mr Lez Baines – Vehicle Servicing Post Deployments**

Mr Lez Baines raised the issue of Fire Appliance servicing and damage post deployments. Mr Scott Medhurst explained that vehicles have been booked in to the Shire workshop for that to occur and damages caused on the fireground will be repaired in due course once the incident is finalised.

**7. NEXT MEETING**

It is recommended that the next meeting and Annual General Meeting of the Bush Fire Advisory Committee be held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at the Shire of Denmark Reception Room the Annual General Meeting will commence at 6.00pm followed by the general meeting.

**8. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

There being no further business to discuss the Presiding Person closed the meeting at 7:54pm.

These minutes were confirmed at the meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Presiding Person at the meeting at which the minutes were confirmed.)*